

STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

2025



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ontario One Call (OOC), operating as a Public Safety Administrative Authority, is mandated to promote, facilitate and enforce safe excavation across Ontario. Through timely locate request facilitation, compliance enforcement, and stakeholder education, OOC works to protect workers and the underground infrastructure that supports Ontarians daily lives. The Stakeholder Advisory Council (SAC) supports this mandate by providing independent, strategic advice to OOC, ensuring that industry perspectives inform regulatory and operational priorities.

SAC is composed of representatives from municipalities, utilities and their associations, construction and excavator associations, locate service providers and other key sectors, such as telecommunications. Meeting quarterly, the Council ensures diverse stakeholder input through transparent discussion and open communication.

In 2025, SAC convened four times with consistently high attendance. Throughout the year, SAC reviewed several initiatives central to OOC's strategic direction. Members provided guidance on stakeholder engagement best practices, advocating for early and frequent communication and consultations via roundtables, focus groups, and webinars. The Council examined OOC's evolving business model, emphasizing fairness, transparency in cost recovery efforts, long-term planning, and the need for clear communication of value. Strong support was expressed for establishing key performance indicators to track progress and demonstrate stakeholder value.

To support continuous improvement, SAC recommended enhancing project forecasting to reduce seasonal delays, improving user training through greater education (e.g., better utilization of OOC's signature courses such as Groundwork and KnowR!sk), and adopting a risk-based approach to prioritize high-impact locates. Members also called for strengthening OOC's service delivery role through a more intuitive, data-driven portal and maintaining public safety as a central focus through ongoing legislative reviews and awareness campaigns.

SAC also articulated support for the Ontario Underground Infrastructure Mapping Strategy, advocating for a standardized, sector-wide system with accurate, accessible data and cross-sector collaboration. Continued consultations with all stakeholders are a priority for OOC, as we aim to build a strategy that captures all perspectives and creates a product that is a collaboration across the sector. Recurring themes included concerns about locate delivery timeframes, with calls to extend locate validity periods, and use stronger enforcement measures. Members highlighted economic uncertainty and reduced construction activity during the 2025 dig season that contributed to locate performance improvements but warned of delays again once activity resumes to normal levels.

Through its work in 2025, SAC has reinforced its commitment to ensuring OOC is effectively delivering its mandate to promote safe excavation, and meeting its strategic plan commitments to enhancing stakeholder collaboration, and continuous improvement in service delivery, strengthening Ontario's excavation safety landscape.

STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COUNCIL (SAC)

2025 Annual Report



INTRODUCTION

Ontario One Call (OOC) serves as a Public Safety Administrative Authority in Ontario, operating under a regulatory mandate to promote safe excavation practices by facilitating timely locate requests, enforcing compliance through administrative penalties, and educating stakeholders to protect underground infrastructure and public safety.

The Stakeholder Advisory Council (SAC) was established in 2024 to provide independent, strategic advice to OOC's executive leadership, offering industry insights and fostering stakeholder alignment to support the organization's public safety mandate and regulatory initiatives. Composed of representatives from municipalities, utilities, construction associations, and other key sectors, SAC meets quarterly and is structured to ensure diverse stakeholder perspectives are reflected through transparent selection criteria and open communication practices. SAC is guided by a Terms of Reference that is reviewed annually.

This Annual Report aims to transparently document SAC's activities, highlighting key discussions, recommendations, and progress made throughout the year. By offering a clear view into the industries priorities and stakeholder engagement, the report reinforces OOC's commitment to accountability, collaboration, and continuous improvement.

AT A GLANCE

Key Activities in 2025

- Assessing the legislative framework
- Providing input into the Ontario Underground Mapping Strategy
- Advising on a new business model to achieve cost recovery

Benefits

- Offers Industry insights
- Fosters stakeholder alignment



Karen Nesbitt, Chair



Patrick McManus, Vice Chair

MESSAGE FROM SAC CHAIR

Karen Nesbitt

As the first Chair of the Stakeholder Advisory Council (SAC), I am proud of the collaborative spirit that has defined our work to date. From the outset, this Council has brought together diverse perspectives to ensure that OOC's strategies reflect the realities of those who plan, build, and maintain Ontario's infrastructure.

Our collective efforts have ensured that the sector's voice remains central to shaping priorities and driving meaningful progress. I commend OOC's willingness to listen and continuously improve, as well as the organization's commitment to providing timely information and detailed materials that enable rich, informed dialogue at every meeting. This level of openness has strengthened the partnership between OOC and SAC, allowing us to engage more deeply and offer guidance that adds real value.



This Council has been instrumental in aligning strategies, fostering innovation, and advancing a shared vision for safer, more efficient excavation practices across the province. As we move into the next cycle, I encourage continued engagement and collaboration. By drawing on the collective expertise of all stakeholders, we can ensure that our shared vision continues to translate into tangible outcomes for the industry and the communities we serve.

2025 HIGHLIGHTS

- During 2025, the council convened at the offices of
 - Ontario Energy Association (OEA)
 - Landscape Ontario (LO), Joe Salemi, Executive Director at LO, took the council on a tour of LO's gardens and buildings.
 - Association of Municipalities (AMO)
- We welcomed international guests from AtkinsRéalis, who lead presentations and discussions on OOC's Underground Infrastructure Mapping Initiative.
- SAC participated at OOC's second annual Conference and Tradeshow in Blue Mountain.
 - Patrick McManus, co- chair of the council and Executive Director at OSWCA, hosted a panel for Canadian Innovation In Action: How One Calls are Advancing Safety.

KEY ACTIVITIES & OUTCOMES

SAC reviewed several initiatives central to OOC's strategic direction. This included:

- Assessing the legislative framework
- Providing input into the Ontario Underground Infrastructure Mapping Strategy
- Developing a new business model to achieve cost recovery

Members advocated for frequent and early involvement through roundtables, focus groups, and sector-specific consultations to strategically guide the initiatives being discussed.

On discussions related to OOC's current legislative framework, there were bold statements made in support of OOC reviewing the Act in collaboration with government to seek stronger enforcement powers to become a more effective regulator. Many members expressed their support and advocacy towards changes that would improve public safety and construction efficiency.

OOC's Underground Infrastructure Mapping Strategy, aimed at improving how underground infrastructure data is collected, stored and used to support safety and planning, saw wide-spread support from the Council, with feedback emphasizing the critical importance of data accuracy, accessibility, ownership, and cross-sector collaboration.

The Council also examined OOC's evolving business model, emphasising fairness, operational effectiveness, and stakeholder value, as key principles to build a narrative around. Members highlighted the need for transparent funding allocation, long-term planning, and enhancements to service delivery, including the locate request portal. Key recommendations highlighted the importance of aligning cost recovery with government infrastructure priorities, clearly articulating the benefit proposition, and ensuring fairness in new fee structures. This advice was incorporated into Ontario One Call's consultation strategy.

TRENDS & COMMON ISSUES

SAC members consistently raised issues to bring awareness to several recurring industry challenges. Timely locates remains a priority, with calls for improved planning and an extension of locate validity periods from 60 to 90 days under the Act to better support large-scale projects. Better project forecasting to reduce backlogs, penalties, and seasonal disruptions were recommended solutions for OOC to take back to the sector as it plans for out years. Economic uncertainty and a noticeable decline in construction activity are also impacting the sector favorably when it comes to timely locates, particularly in the 2025 dig season. Members also noted a reduction in project tenders, disproportionately affecting smaller firms, contributing to slower infrastructure and housing development. Concerns were also raised about labour retention, as workforce reductions during the downturn could lead to long-term challenges in meeting future demand when activity resumes.

Looking ahead, SAC members have identified several emerging challenges and opportunities that call for strategic focus and proactive planning. These are highlighted on the next page.

SAC RECOMMENDATIONS

Enhance Project Forecasting

To better manage peak seasons and reduce the risk of backlogs, administrative penalties, and delays, it is recommended that project forecasting practices be strengthened. Improved forecasting will support more efficient planning and execution of locate activities, particularly during high-demand periods.

Through its Digital Roadmap, OOC is advancing the use of data analytics to identify trends, assess risks, and anticipate issues before they arise, enabling more effective predictive information that could support the industry in greater forecasting and resource planning across the excavation ecosystem.

Improve User Training

Comprehensive training should be provided to ensure accurate ticket submissions and reduce operational inefficiencies. Enhanced training will help users better understand excavation requirements and improve the overall quality of locate requests.

In alignment with this recommendation, the launch of the new Groundwork course this calendar year marks a significant advancement in OOC's education efforts. The course is designed to address common challenges by offering thorough instructions on safe excavation, thereby supporting improved ticket accuracy and operational efficiency.

Adopt a Risk-Based Approach to Locate Requests

It is recommended that a risk-based approach be adopted to prioritize high-risk projects, particularly those with potential public safety impacts. This strategy will enable more effective resource allocation and improve safety outcomes across the province.

This recommendation is currently part of ongoing discussions within the sector. A locate prioritization framework remains a key future goal expected to be industry led/driven.

SAC RECOMMENDATIONS

Explore Cost Recovery Avenues

OOC should continue to explore a variety of cost recovery mechanisms to ensure long-term financial sustainability while minimizing impact on stakeholders. Identifying and implementing diverse funding strategies will support the organization's operational and strategic goals.

This recommendation aligns with ongoing activities and discussions under the strategic imperative of Building Financial Sustainability. Continued exploration of a new business model remains a central focus for OOC leadership, including assessing how all stakeholder groups can fairly contribute to OOC's cost recovery efforts.

Strengthen OOC's Regulatory Role to Enhanced Service Delivery

To enhance effectiveness as a regulator, OOC should invest in a more intuitive, data-driven portal that facilitates two-way communication between locators and excavators. This will improve transparency, responsiveness, and efficiency in the locate process. This recommendation is also part of the broader conversation around regulatory modernization.

OOC's Digital Roadmap identifies a number of enhancements to the locate request process and overall locate request portal. This includes enhanced locate request management tools, real-time notifications, allowing homeowners to independently submit locate request, sharing of locate requests, minimizing locate suspensions and many more improvements to the process. OOC is proud of its efforts to streamline the locate request processes (e.g., reducing manual functions) but recognizes it still has room for improvement.

Maintain Focus on Public Safety

Public safety must remain central to all regulatory and operational changes. Consistent messaging to ensure that safety remains a shared priority across all stakeholders is recommended.

OOC is committed to advocating for public safety through sustained engagement and clear, consistent communication, as well as through its work with government partners to potentially review the current legislative framework.

CONCLUSION

SAC has made meaningful contributions that have strengthened collaboration and advanced several of OOC's key initiatives through thoughtful, strategic guidance. Looking ahead, the Council's focus will be on actively shaping and guiding OOC's delivery, refining priorities, driving measurable outcomes, and ensuring alignment with both organizational goals and the evolving industry landscape. SAC will continue to deepen its engagement in strategic initiatives, leveraging its collective industry insight to inform recommendations, anticipate challenges, and maximize OOC's impact across the excavation sector.

We look forward to another successful year gaining valuable feedback from our Stakeholder Advisory Council.



**THANK YOU
SAC FOR A
GREAT YEAR!**



Meaningful Input & Strategic Guidance

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Supported OOC's Transformation

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2026 Outlook

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STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

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